

FORMATION

OF THE

SINGAPORE INSTITUTION.

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SINGAPORE INSTITUTION.

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AT a Meeting of the principal Inhabitants of Singapore, held at the Residency-House on the 1st of April, 1823. The Hon. Sir T. S. RAFFLES, Lieutenant-Governor of Fort Marlborough and its Dependencies presiding.

SIR STAMFORD RAFFLES stated, that he had convened the present meeting for the purpose of laying before the public the arrangements which he had adopted for the Establishment of an Institution at Singapore, having for its object the cultivation of the languages of China, Siam, and the Malayan Archipelago; and the improvement of the moral and intellectual condition of the inhabitants of those countries.

He observed, that he had for many years contemplated the advantages which might arise from affording the means of education to the inhabitants

of the Malayan Archipelago, and that shortly after the establishment of the British Government in Singapore, he had suggested a plan for attaining this object by the establishment of an institution of the nature of a Native College; but that from political and other circumstances, the establishment of the proposed institution had been delayed till the present period. That providence however had recently brought to these shores that excellent and good man Dr. Morrison, the founder and president of the Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca; and that, in concert with him, a plan had now been adopted and decided upon, for removing that College to Singapore, and uniting it with the proposed Malayan College, under the general designation of the "Singapore Institution."

Sir Stamford Raffles then submitted, in the form of a Minute, which he was desirous of placing on the records of the institution, his ideas on the advantages of a Malayan College, as first contemplated by him, together with a paper containing the suggestions of Dr. Morrison, for uniting the two Colleges in one general institution, observing, that as these documents would shew not only the objects and views of the Founders of the Singapore Institution, as now adopted, but the progress by which its establishment was brought about, it became unnecessary for him to detain them by further observations.

The said papers were then read for general information, being as follows:—

MINUTE BY SIR STAMFORD RAFFLES
ON THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A MALAYAN COLLEGE
AT SINGAPORE.

IT is the peculiar characteristic of Great Britain, that wherever her influence has been extended, it has carried civilization and improvement in its train. To whatever quarter of the world her arms or her policy have led her, it has been her object to extend those blessings of freedom and justice for which she herself stands so pre-eminent. Whether in asserting the rights of independent nations, whether advocating the cause of the captive and the slave, or promoting the diffusion of truth and knowledge, England has always led the van. In the vast regions of India where she has raised an empire unparalleled in history, no sooner was the sword of conquest sheathed, than her attention was turned to the dispensing of justice, to giving security to the persons and property, and to the improvement of the condition of her new subjects---to a reform in the whole judicial and revenue administration of the country, to the establishment of a system of internal management calculated to relieve the inhabitants from oppression and exaction, and to the dissemination of those principles and that knowledge which should elevate the people whom conquest had placed under her sway, and thus to render her own prosperity dependant on that of the people over whom she ruled. A desire to know the origin and early history of the people, their institutions, laws, and opinions, led to associations expressly directed to this end; while by the application of

the information thus obtained to the present circumstances of the country, the spirit and principles of British rule have rapidly augmented the power, and increased the resources of the state, at the same time that they have in no less degree tended to excite the intellectual energies and increase the individual happiness of the people.

The acquisitions of Great Britain in the East have not been made in the spirit of conquest; a concurrence of circumstances not to be controuled, and the energies of her sons have carried her forward on a tide whose impulse has been irresistible. Other nations may have pursued the same course of conquest and success, but they have not like her paused in their career, and by moderation and justice consolidated what they had gained. This is the rock on which her Indian empire is placed, and it is on a perseverance in the principles which have already guided her that she must depend for maintaining her commanding station, and for saving her from adding one more to the list of those who have contended for empire, and have sunk beneath the weight of their own ambition. Conquest has led to conquest, and our influence must continue to extend; the tide has received its impetus and it would be in vain to attempt to stem its current, but let the same principles be kept in view, let our minds and policy expand with our empire, and it will not only be the greatest, but the firmest and most enduring that has yet been held forth to the view and admiration of the world. While we raise those in the scale of civilization over whom our influence or our empire is extended, we shall lay the foundations of our dominion on the firm basis of justice and mutual advantage, instead of the uncertain and unsubstantial tenure of force and intrigue.

Such have been the principles of our Indian administration wherever we have acquired a territorial influence; it

remains to be considered how they can be best applied to countries where territory is not our object, but whose commerce is not less essential to our interests. With the countries East of Bengal an extensive commercial intercourse has always been carried on, and our influence is more or less felt throughout the whole---from the banks of the Ganges to China and New Holland. Recent events have directed our attention to these, and in a particular manner to the Malayan Archipelago, where a vast field of commercial speculation has been opened, the limits of which it is difficult to foresee. A variety of circumstances have concurred to extend our connexions in this quarter, and late arrangements have added much to their importance and consideration. Our connexion with them however stands on a very different footing from that with the people of India; however inviting and extensive their resources, it is considered that they can be best drawn forth by the native energies of the people themselves; and that it is by the reciprocal advantages of commerce, and commerce alone, that we may best promote our own interests and their advancement. A few stations are occupied for the security and protection of our trade, and the independence of all the surrounding states is not only acknowledged but maintained and supported by us.

Commerce being therefore the principle on which our connexions with the Eastern States are formed, it behoves us to consider the effects which it is calculated to produce. Commerce is universally allowed to bring many benefits in its train, and in particular to be favourable to civilization and general improvement. Like all other powerful agents however, it has proved the cause of many evils when improperly directed or not sufficiently controuled. It creates wants and introduces luxuries, but if there exist no principle for the regulation of these, and if there be nothing to

check their influence, sensuality, vice, and corruption will be the necessary results. Where the social institutions are favourable to independence and improvement, where the intellectual powers are cultivated and expanded, commerce opens a wider field for their exertion, and wealth and refinement become consistent with all that ennobles and exalts human nature. Education must keep pace with commerce in order that its benefits may be ensured and its evils avoided, and in our connexion with these countries, it should be our care that while with one hand we carry to their shores the capital of our merchants, the other should be stretched forth to offer them the means of intellectual improvement. Happily our policy is in accordance with these views and principles, and neither in the state of the countries themselves, nor in the character of their varied and extensive population, do we find any thing opposed. On the contrary, they invite us to the field, and every motive of humanity, policy, and religion, seems to combine to recommend our early attention to this important object.

A few words will be sufficient to shew the nature and extent of this field. Within its narrowest limits it embraces the whole of that vast Archipelago which stretching from Sumatra and Java to the Islands of the Pacific, and thence to the shores of China and Japan, has in all ages excited the attention and attracted the cupidity of more civilized nations;---whose valuable and peculiar productions contributed to swell the extravagance of Roman luxury, and in more modern times has raised the power and consequence of every successive European nation into whose hands its commerce has fallen;---it has raised several of these from insignificance and obscurity to power and eminence, and perhaps in its earliest period among the Italian states, communicated the first electric spark which awoke to life the energies and the literature of Europe. The Native

population of these interesting Islands cannot be estimated at less than from ten to fifteen millions, of which Java alone contains five or six, and Sumatra not less than three.

In a more extensive view must be included the rich and populous countries of Ava and Siam, Camboja, Cochin-China and Tonkin, the population of which is still more extensive than that of the Islands. And if to this we add the numerous Chinese population which is dispersed throughout these countries, and through the means of whom the light of knowledge may be extended to the remotest part of the Chinese empire and even to Japan, it will readily be acknowledged that the field is perhaps the most extensive, interesting, and important, that ever offered itself to the contemplation of the philanthropic and enlightened mind.

When we descend to particulars, and consider the present state and circumstances of this extensive and varied population, and the history and character of the nations and tribes of which it is composed, we shall be more convinced of the necessity which exists, and of the advantages which must result from affording them the means of education and improvement. Among no people with whom we have become acquainted shall we find greater aptness to receive instruction, or fewer obstacles in the way of its communication.

Of the Malays who inhabit the interior of Sumatra, and are settled on the Coasts throughout the Archipelago, it may be necessary to speak in the first place. The peculiar character of these people has always excited much attention, and various and opposite opinions have been entertained regarding them. By some who have viewed only the darker side, they have been considered, with reference to their piracies and vices alone, as a people devoid of all regular government and principle, and abandoned to the

influence of lawless and ungovernable passions. By others however who have taken a deeper view, and have become more intimately acquainted with their character, a different estimate has been formed. They admit the want of efficient government, but consider the people themselves to be possessed of high qualities, and such as might under more favourable circumstances be usefully and beneficially directed. They find in the personal independence of character which they display, their high sense of honour and impatience of insult, and in their habits of reasoning and reflection, the rudiments of improvement and the basis of a better order of society, while in the obscurity, of their early history, the wide diffusion of their language and the traces of their former greatness, they discover an infinite source of speculation and interest.

That they once occupied a more commanding political station in these seas appears to be beyond a doubt, and that they maintained this position until after the introduction of Mahomedanism seems equally certain. From the geographical situation of the more important countries then occupied by them, they were the first to come in contact with Mussulman Missionaries, and to embrace their tenets. Their power was on the decline when Europeans first visited their seas. At that period however, the authority of Menangkabau, the ancient seat of government, was still acknowledged, and the states of Acheen and Malacca long disputed the progress of the Portuguese arms. The whole of Sumatra at one period was subject to the supreme power of Menangkabau, and evidence of the former grandeur and superiority of this state are still found not only in the pompous edicts of its sovereigns, and in the veneration and respect paid to the most distant branches of the family, but in the comparatively high and improved state of cultivation of the country, and in the vestiges of antiquity which

have recently been discovered in it. This country occupies the central districts of Sumatra, and contains between one and two millions of inhabitants, the whole of whom with the exception of such as may be employed in the gold mines for which it has always been celebrated, are devoted to agriculture. The remains of sculpture and inscriptions found near the ancient capital correspond with those discovered in Java, and prove them to have been under the influence of the same Hindoo faith which prevailed on that Island till the establishment of Mahomedanism there in the fifteenth century.

At what period the people of Menangkabau embraced the doctrines of the prophet does not appear, and would form an interesting subject of enquiry. The conversion of Malacca and Acheen took place in the thirteenth century, but it is uncertain whether Menangkabau was converted previous to this date, although the religion is said to have been preached in Sumatra as early as the twelfth century. It was about this latter period 1160, that a colony would appear to have issued from the interior of Sumatra, and established the maritime state of Singapura at the extremity of the Malay Peninsula, where a line of Hindoo princes continued to reign until the establishment of Malacca and the conversion of that place in 1276. Whatever may in more remote times have been the nature of the intercourse between foreign nations and Menangkabau itself, we know that Singapura during the period noticed was an extensively maritime and commercial state, and that on the first arrival of the Portuguese at Malacca, that emporium embraced the largest portion of the commerce between Eastern and Western nations. It is not necessary to enter into the history of the decline and fall of the Malay states of Malacca and Acheen, or of the establishment of Johor. The maritime and commercial enterprize of the people had

already spread them far and wide through the Archipelago, and the power and policy of their European visitors, by breaking down their larger settlements, contributed to scatter them still wider, and to force them to form still smaller establishments wherever they could escape their power and vigilance.

The opinion generally formed of the character of this people having been taken from the maritime states, it may be sufficient on the present occasion to advert to some particulars in the constitution of their government and to the habits and character of the people who compose them.

The government of these states, which are established in more or less power on the different rivers on the Eastern Coast of Sumatra and on the Malay Peninsula, as well as on the Coast of Borneo and throughout the smaller Islands, is founded on principles entirely feudal. A high respect is paid to the person and family of the prince, who usually traces his descent through a long line of ancestors generally originating on the Malayan side from Menangkabau or Johor, and not unfrequently on the Mahomedan side from the descendants of the prophet. The nobles are chiefs at the head of a numerous train of dependants whose services they command. Their civil institutions and internal policy are a mixture of the Mohamedan with their own more ancient and peculiar customs and usages, the latter of which predominate: in the principal states they are collected in an ill-digested code but in the inferior establishments they are trusted to tradition.

The Malays with all their faults are distinguished not only by the high respect they pay to ancestry, and nobility of descent, and their entire devotion to their chiefs, and to the cause they undertake, but by a veneration and reverence for the experience and opinions of their elders. They never enter on an enterprize without duly weighing its advantages

and consequences, but when once embarked in it, they devote themselves to its accomplishment. They are sparing of their labour and are judicious in its application, but when roused into action are not wanting in spirit and enthusiasm. In their commercial dealings they are keen and speculative, and a spirit of gaming is prevalent, but in their general habits they are far from penurious.

With a knowledge of this character, we may find in the circumstances in which they have been placed some excuse for the frequent piracies, and the practice of "running a muck" with which they have so often and justly been accused. That European policy which first destroyed the independence of their more respectable states and subsequently appropriated to itself the whole trade of the Archipelago, left them without the means of honest subsistence, while by the extreme severity of its tortures and punishments it drove them to a state of desperation. Thus piracy became honorable, and that devotion which on another occasion would have been called a virtue became a crime.

Of the Javans a higher estimate may be formed; though wanting in the native boldness and enterprize of character which distinguishes the Malays, they have many qualities in common with them, but bear deeper traces of foreign influence and at the present period at least stand much higher in the scale of civilization. They are almost exclusively agricultural, and in the extraordinary fertility of their country they find sufficient inducements to prefer a life of comparative ease and comfort within their own shores to one of enterprize or hazard beyond them. The causes which have contributed to their present improved state are various, and however interesting, it would swell this paper beyond its due limits to enter on them.

The Madurese who inhabit the neighbouring Island are

distinguished for more spirit and enterprize, but the people in that quarter who more peculiarly attract our interest are those of Bali, an Island lying immediately East of Java, and who at the present day exhibit the extraordinary fact of the existence of an independant Hindoo government in this remote quarter of the East. It was in this Island, that on the establishment of Mahomedanism in Java in the fifteenth century, the Hindoos who adhered to their original faith took refuge, where they have preserved the recollection of their former greatness and the records and form of their religion. This Island no part of which has ever been subjected to European authority, contains with Lombok immediately adjoining, a population not far short of a million. The shores are unfavourable to commerce and the people have not hitherto been much inclined to distant enterprize. The Island itself has long been subjected to all the horrors of an active Slave Trade, by which means its inhabitants have been distributed among the European settlements. A more honest commerce however has been latterly attracted to it, and both Bugguese and Chinese have formed small establishments in the principal towns. In their personal character they are remarkable for a high independence and impatience of controul. A redundant population added to the Slave Trade has separated them into various states which are generally at war with each other.

In the Island of Celebes we find the people of a still more enterprizing character, the elective form of their government offers a singular anomaly among Asiatic States, and is not the least peculiar of their institutions. The Bugguese are the most adventurous traders of the Archipelago, to every part of which they carry their speculations and even extend them to the Coast of New Holland. They are remarkable for fair dealing and the extent of their transactions. They were converted to Mahomedanism at a much

later period than either the Javans or Malays and not generally till after the arrival of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. This Island contains an extensive population but its interior and North Western provinces are but little known and are inhabited by the same description of uncultivated people as are found in the interior of Borneo and the larger Islands to the Eastward.

Of the population of the Moluccas it may be remarked that they are for the most part Christians of the Lutheran persuasion. The magnitude and importance of Borneo more peculiarly attracts our attention. Malay settlements are formed on its principal rivers, and extensive colonies of Chinese have established themselves in the vicinity of the Gold Mines a short distance inland, but the interior of the Island is yet unknown. Various estimates of its population have been formed but the data are too uncertain to be depended upon. The tribes which inhabit the interior differ much in character, but the majority appear to be agricultural, and a race of people who might be easily improved and civilized. Others again are extremely barbarous, and it must be admitted that the practice of man-hunting for the purpose of obtaining the heads of the victims is too frequent throughout. Of this latter description are various tribes still inhabiting the interior of Celebes, Ceram and Jelo usually known by the name of Harafuras or Alfoors.

If we add to the above, the population of the Philippines, which is not estimated at less than three millions, Magindanao and the Soolo Archipelago, the Battas and other interior tribes of Sumatra, and the Woolly-headed race occasionally found on the Peninsula and the larger Islands and more extensively established in Papua or New Guinea, some idea may be formed of the extent and nature of the varied population of this interesting Archipelago. But the numerous Chinese settlers who now form a consi-

derable portion of this population and who have given a stimulus to the industry of its inhabitants must not be passed over in silence. In the Island of Java the number of these settlers is not less than 100,000; a similar number is to be found in Siam; in Borneo they are still more numerous, and they are to be met with in every well regulated state. The valuable Gold Mines of the latter Island have offered a powerful inducement to their establishment: they are worked almost exclusively by Chinese, and an extensive population of Dayaks from the interior are rapidly extending cultivation in their vicinity. There seems to be no limits to the increase of Chinese on this Island, the redundance of population in the Mother Country, the constant intercourse which exists with it, and the inducements afforded for colonization in a new soil, where in addition to agricultural and commercial resources, the produce of gold and diamonds appears to be only proportioned to the labour employed, are such that to a speculating and industrious people like the Chinese, they must continue to operate in spite of political restrictions and partial exactions. It deserves remark that of all the inhabitants of the Archipelago, the Chinese as well from their assimilating more with the customs of Europeans than the native Mahomedans, as from their habits of obedience and submission to power, are uniformly found to be the most peaceable and improveable.

From the review now taken it will be seen how varied is the population of this Archipelago both in character and employments, and that it consists both of agricultural and commercial classes, of different ranks in the scale of each, from the wildest tribes who seek a precarious subsistence in their woods and forests to the civilized Javan who has drawn forth the riches of his unequalled soil and made it the Granary of these Islands: and from the petty trader

who collects the scattered produce of the interior, to the Chinese capitalist who receives it from them, and disperses it again to more distant regions. Situated between the rich and populous Continents of China on the one hand and India on the other, and furnishing to Europe the means of an extensive commerce, the demand for the produce of those Islands is unfailing, and that produce is only limited by the extent of the population. By means of the variety of its tribes, their intermixture and connexion with each other, and the accessible nature of the Coasts washed by the smoothest seas in the world, while large and navigable rivers open communication with the interior, the stimulus of this commerce is propagated in successive waves through the whole, and the inexhaustible resources of the Country are drawn forth in a manner and to an extent that could not otherwise have been obtained. Each is dependant on the other and receives and communicates a portion of the general activity. Thus the savage and intractable Batta collects and furnishes the Camphor and Benjamin the spontaneous produce of his woods, the equally barbarous Dayak and wild Harafura ransacks the bowels of the earth for its Gold and its Diamonds, the inhabitants of Soolo seeks for the Pearl beneath the waters that surround him, and others traverse the shores for the Tripang or Sea Slug, or descend into its rocky caverns for the Chinese luxury of bird's nests. Ascending from these we find the more civilized Sumatran, whose agriculture is yet rude, employed in the raising of Pepper, the Native of Moluccas in the culture of the Nutmeg and the Clove, the still higher Javan and Siamese besides their abundant harvests of Rice, supplying Europe with their Coffee and Sugar, and all impelled and set in motion by the spirit of commerce. Not less varied are the people who collect this produce from all these different quarters till it is finally shipped for Europe India and

China, from the petty bartering trader who brings it from the interior to the ports and mouths of the rivers, the Malay who conveys it from port to port, the more adventurous Bugguese who sweeps the remote shores to concentrate their produce at the Emporia, to the Chinese merchant who sends his junks laden with this accumulated produce to be dispersed through the empire of China and furnishes Europeans with the cargoes of their ships. Through the same diverging channels are again circulated the manufactures of India and Europe and thus a constant intercourse and circulation is maintained through the whole. How much this intercourse is facilitated by the nature of the countries, broken into innumerable islands may be readily conceived, and the vastness of the field may be inferred from the extent to which its commerce has actually been carried under every disadvantage of monopolizing policy and of insecurity of person and property by which the condition of the people has been depressed and their increase prevented. When we consider that they are placed at the very threshold of China, a country overflowing with an enterprising and industrious population anxious and eager to settle wherever security and protection is afforded, that it is this people who have chiefly contributed to maintain and support the energies of the native population and have diffused the stimulus of their own activity wherever they have settled, and that protection only is wanted to accumulate them in any numbers, to create it may be said a second China, the resources and means of this extraordinary Archipelago will appear without limits.

Viewed in this light, Borneo and the Eastern Islands may become to China, what America is already to the nations of Europe. The superabundant and overflowing population of China affords an almost inexhaustible source of colonization, while the new and fertile soil of these islands offers

the means of immediate and plentiful subsistence to any numbers who may settle in them. How rapidly under such circumstances these colonies may increase in population where the climate is at least as congenial to the Chinese as that of America to Europeans, may be readily conceived from the experience which the latter has afforded. The wealth of their mines and the extent of their own native population added to the greater proximity of China, are advantages which were not enjoyed by America, and must contribute to accelerate the progress of colonization.

A scene like this cannot be viewed with indifference by the philosophic and contemplative mind; the diversified form in which the human character is exhibited, the new and original features which it displays, and the circumstances which have restrained or accelerated the developement of our nature in these extensive and remote regions, offer sources of almost inexhaustible enquiry and research, while the obscurity which darkens the origin and early history of the people, the peculiarity of their languages laws and customs, and the vestiges which remain of a higher state of the arts and of learning, offer in a literary and scientific view pursuits of no less interest than importance.---Placed as we shall be in the very centre of this Archipelago, the life and soul of its extensive commerce, and maintaining with its most distant parts and with the adjacent Continent a constant and rapidly increasing intercourse, the means are afforded to us above all other nations of prosecuting these studies with facility and advantage.

We here find human nature at its lowest point in the Woolly-headed savage who roams his woods in absolute nakedness, deriving a precarious subsistence from roots and fish and with no other habitation than a cavern or a tree; we can trace the progress of improvement in those whose agriculture is yet in its infancy, who clear a portion of their

woods by fire and take a contingency out of it by planting a little rice in the soil thus enriched by the ashes. We dwell with more pleasure on those rich tracts of cultivation which adorn the slopes of the central districts of Java and Sumatra, where the mountain torrent is arrested in its course and made to flow over and fertilize successive terraces on which abundant harvests are reaped. We shall meet with states that have risen by commerce to wealth and eminence, and have now sunk since her sail has been displayed on other shores. To the Historian and the Antiquarian, the field here presented is unbounded. The latter will trace in the languages and monuments, the origin and early history of these interesting people, he will find the Malayan language diffused under various modifications from Madagascar on the Coast of Africa to the Islands of the Pacific, he will find it connected with Hinduism by an influx of Sanscrit words and will trace the effects of subsequent conversion in an accession of Arabic terms. In their ancient monuments and inscription, he will find proofs of the existence of the faith of Brama or of Boudh, and of their greatness as nations in the magnitude of their remains. He will find temples and sculptures which rival in grandeur and extent those of continental India, and through the mists of tradition will discover the faint light of glories that have past away. He will find languages of singular perfection and richness that are no longer understood except by the learned, in short he will find abundant proof of a former high state of civilization from which they have fallen. The causes of this declension, the vicissitudes they have undergone and their history in more modern times when the progress of the Mussulman faith and of European arms overturned and threw into confusion the ancient order of things, are subjects not less interesting than untouched. Three centuries of intercourse have given but little information upon these and other

interesting points. War and commerce has hitherto absorbed the attention of those who have visited these regions, with some exceptions, which have rather served to excite than to gratify curiosity. Late years have been more fertile and have opened the way to further enquiries, and the spirit which has been awakened should not be suffered to sleep.

It would be endless to point out the desiderata which yet remain to be supplied, or the subjects of interest which yet remain to be investigated. The origin of Bouddhism, as it may be traced in Siam and particularly Laos and other countries not yet visited by Europeans but with which a commercial intercourse exists, is not the least of these. The objects of science are not less numerous, to say nothing of the vast field which the immense empire of China opens to the speculative mind. Through the means of her native traders who frequent these seas and are protected by our flag, we have it in our power to prosecute the most extensive researches, and to communicate as well as receive information which may be reciprocally useful and acceptable. While as a manufacturing nation we are compelled to supply this empire with the raw produce of our territories, we can never want an interest in enquiring into the principles and means by which they are thus able to supersede us even with the advantage of our unrivalled Machinery. The Chinese mind itself, the literature and character of this extraordinary people, of whom so little is known that their place and rank in the scale of civilization is yet undetermined, are questions which have long attracted the attention of the Western world. The current of their ideas, the mould of their minds, and the whole bent and direction of their powers differ so much from our own, that an estimate of them is no easy task. We find them dispersing themselves abroad, and carrying with them a spirit of enterprize and speculation combined with an industry

and prudence that makes them flourish and acquire opulence wherever they settle.

Such is the range of enquiry open to the philosopher, but to him who is interested in the cause of humanity, who thinks that the diffusion of the humanizing arts is as essential to the character of our nation as the acquisition of power and wealth, and that wherever our flag is carried it should confer the benefits of civilization on those whom it protects, it will appear no less important, that in proportion as we extend the field of our own enquiry and information, we should apply it to the advantage of those with whom we are connected, and endeavour to diffuse among them the light of knowledge and the means of moral and intellectual improvement.

The object of our stations being confined to the protection and encouragement of a free and unrestricted commerce with the whole of these countries, and our establishments being on this footing and principle, no jealousy can exist where we make our enquiries. When the man of science enquires for the mineral or vegetable productions of any particular country, or the manner in which the fields are cultivated or the mines worked, no motive will exist for withholding information, but if in return we are anxious and ready to disseminate the superior knowledge we ourselves possess, how much shall we increase this readiness and desire on the part of the natives, and what may not be the extent of the blessings we may in exchange confer on these extensive regions. How noble the object, how beneficial the effects, to carry with our commerce the lights of instruction and moral improvement. How much more exalted the character in which we shall appear, how much more congenial to every British feeling. By collecting the traditions of the country, and affording the means of instruction to all who visit our stations, we shall give an

additional inducement to general intercourse; while the merchant will pursue his gain, the representative of our government will acquire a higher character and more general respect, by devoting a portion of his time to the diffusion of that knowledge and of those principles which form the happiness and basis of all civilized society. The native inhabitant who will be first attracted by commerce, will imbibe a respect for our institutions, and when he finds that some of these are destined exclusively for his own benefit; while he applauds and respects the motive, he will not fail to profit by them. Our civil institutions and political influence are calculated to increase the population and wealth of these countries, and cultivation of mind seems alone wanting to raise them to such a rank among the nations of the world as their geographical situation and climate may admit. And shall we who have been so favoured among other nations refuse to encourage the growth of intellectual improvement, or rather shall we not consider it one of our first duties to afford the means of education to surrounding countries and thus render our stations not only the seats of commerce but of literature and the arts? Will not our best inclinations and feelings be thus gratified at the same time that we are contributing to raise millions in the scale of civilization. It may be observed that in proportion as the people are civilized, our intercourse with the islands will become more general more secure and more advantageous; that the native riches of the countries which they inhabit seem inexhaustible, and that the eventual extent of our commerce with them must consequently depend on the growth of intellectual improvement and the extension of moral principles. A knowledge of the languages of these countries considered on the most extensive scale, is essential to all investigation, and may not the acquisition of these be pursued with most advantage in connexion with some

defined plan for educating the higher orders of the inhabitants? May not one object mutually aid the other, and the interests of philanthropy and literature be best consulted by making the advantages reciprocal?

There is nothing perhaps which distinguishes the character of these Islanders from the people of India more than the absence of inveterate prejudice and the little influence Mahomedanism has had over their conduct and mode of thinking. With them neither civil nor religious institutions seem to stand in the way of improvement, while the aptness and solicitude of the people to receive instruction is remarkable, and in the higher classes we often find a disposition to enjoy the luxuries and comforts of European life and to assimilate to its manners and courtesies. The states more advanced in civilization have embraced the Mahomedan faith, which still continues to make a slow progress throughout the Archipelago. This faith was not introduced by conquest but by the gradual progress of persuasion exerted by active Missionaries on a simple and ingenuous people. It is on the Mussulman teachers alone that they are at present dependant for instruction, but these are now comparatively few and of an inferior order; many of them little better than manumitted slaves though assuming the titles of Seids and Sheiks. When we consider that the whole of the Archipelago is left open to the views and schemes of these men, that they promise the joys of paradise in recompense of the slight ceremony of circumcision, and in this world exemption from the pains of slavery to which all unbelievers are liable, we may account for the facility with which conversion is still effected, and the little impression it makes on the people. Institutions of the nature of Colleges were formerly maintained by the native princes of Bantam and in the interior of Java and Sumatra, particularly at Menangkabau, to which latter a visit was

considered only less meritorious than a pilgrimage to Mecca. These Colleges have disappeared with the power of the native government which supported them, and their place is very imperfectly supplied by the inferior and illiterate priests who are settled among them. The want of an institution of this nature has long been felt and complained of by the higher orders, and a desire has even been expressed of sending their children to Bengal, but the distance and want of means to defray the expense has generally prevented them from doing so. In an instance however in which this has taken place we shall find evidence of the capacity of the people to receive instruction and are able to form some estimate of the degree of improvement to which they might attain if similar advantages were enjoyed by all. Shortly after the conquest of Java, two sons of the Regent of Samarang were sent to Bengal where they remained only two years, but returned to their native country not only with a general knowledge of the English language but versed in the elements of general history science and literature. The rapid progress made by these youths not only in these attainments but in their manners, habits and principles, has been the surprize and admiration of all who have known them. It may be observed generally with regard to Mahomedanism in the Eastern Islands, that although the more respectable part of the population pay some attention to its forms as the established religion of the country, they are far more attached and devoted to their ancient traditions and customs, inso-much that in most of the states the civil code of the Koran is almost unknown. In many of the countries which have not yet embraced Mahomedanism, such as those of the Battas and other interior tribes of Sumatra the Islands along its Western Coast and the Dayaks of Borneo, it is difficult to say what are their religious tenets. Faint traces

of Hinduism are occasionally discovered, blended with local and original ideas, and it has even been questioned whether some of them have any religion at all.

The inducements and facilities which are thus afforded, suggest the advantage and necessity of forming an institution of the nature of a College, which shall embrace not only the object of educating the higher classes of the native population, but at the same time that of affording instruction to the Officers of the Company in the native languages, and of facilitating our more general researches into the history condition and resources of these countries.

An institution of this kind formed on a simple but respectable plan, would be hailed with satisfaction by the native chiefs, who as far as their immediate means admit may be expected to contribute to its support; and a class of intelligent natives who would be employed as teachers would always be at the command and disposal of government. The want of such a class of men has long been felt, and is perhaps in a considerable degree owing to the absence of any centre or seat of learning to which they could resort.

The position and circumstances of Singapura point it out as the most eligible situation for such an establishment. Its central situation among the Malay states, and the commanding influence of its commerce, render it a place of general and convenient resort, while in the minds of the natives it will always be associated with their fondest recollections as the seat of their ancient government before the influence of a foreign faith had shaken those institutions for which they still preserve so high an attachment and reverence. The advantage of selecting a place thus hallowed by the ideas of a remote antiquity, and the veneration attached to its ancient line of Kings from whom they are still proud to trace their descent, must be obvious.

The objects of such an institution may be briefly stated as follows :

FIRST. To educate the sons of the higher order of natives and others.

SECONDLY. To afford the means of instruction in the native languages to such of the Company's servants and others as may desire it.

THIRDLY. To collect the scattered literature and traditions of the country, with whatever may illustrate their laws and customs, and to publish and circulate in a correct form the most important of these, with such other works as may be calculated to raise the character of the institution and to be useful or instructive to the people.

The more immediate effects which may be expected to result from an institution of this nature, have already been pointed out, and are such as will readily suggest themselves. Native Schools have already been established, and may be expected to spread in various directions; connected with these an institution of the nature now proposed is calculated to complete the system, and by affording to the higher classes a participation in the general progress of improvement, to raise them in a corresponding degree and thus preserve and cement the natural relations of society. After what has been said, it is needless to enlarge on the more obvious and striking advantages which must result from the general diffusion of knowledge among a people so situated. The natural and certain effect must be the improvement of their condition, and a consequent advancement in civilization and happiness. The weakness of the chiefs is an evil which has been long felt and acknowledged in these countries, and to cultivate and improve their intellectual powers seems to be the most effectual remedy. They will duly appreciate the benefit conferred, and while it must inevitably tend to attach them more closely to

us, we shall find our recompence in the stability of their future authority, and the general security and good order which must be the result.

There are however some results of a more distant and speculative nature, which it is impossible to pass over unnoticed. These relate more particularly to the eventual abolition of slavery, the modification of their more objectionable civil institutions, particularly those relating to debts and marriages, and the discontinuance of the horrid practices of cannibalism and man-hunting, but too prevalent among some of the more barbarous tribes, as the Battas and Alfours.

It is almost unnecessary to state, that slavery is not only tolerated and acknowledged by the Malay law, but until recently it was openly encouraged by the chief European authority in these seas. Batavia for the last two centuries has been the principal and fatal mart to which the majority were carried, and the Islands of Bali, Celebes and Nias are the countries whence the supplies were principally procured. Many thousands of the victims of this lawless traffic were annually obtained in much the same manner as on the Coast of Africa, and the trade has always been a very profitable one and the principal support of piracy. While the British were in possession of Java, the act of parliament declaring the trade felony on the part of its own subjects was made a colonial law; this prohibition does not appear to have been repealed, and much benefit may be anticipated from the Batavian Government not sanctioning the practice by its authority. But when we consider the extent and varied interests of the Archipelago, the number of slaves still in Java, and the right which every Mahomedan exercises according to his ability of converting or reducing to slavery every unbeliever he meets with, the extent of the population still unconverted, and the sanction

given to Slavery by the Malay custom, we can only look for the complete remedy of the evil by the extension of our influence among the Native states, and the effects which a better education may produce on the chiefs.

Throughout the greater part of the Eastern states the Mahomedan law has never been adopted in its full extent. In some it has been blended with the original customs and institutions, and in others not introduced at all. The laws regarding debts and marriages are peculiarly illustrative of this, and however in principle they may have been applicable to a former state of society, are now in practice found to be in many places highly oppressive and injurious to the increase of population. This fact is fully exemplified in the vicinity of Bencoolen, where a large portion of the population is reduced to a state little better than that of actual slavery on account of debts, and fully one-fourth of the marriageable females remain in a state of celibacy from the obstacles which their customs oppose to marriage. The former arises from the custom which gives the creditor an unlimited right over the services of the debtor for any sum however small; in many cases the family and relations of the debtor are further liable in the same manner. In the case of marriage it may be observed that the daughters are considered to form a part of the property of the father, and are only to be purchased from him by the suitor at a price exceeding the usual means of the men. The effects of education may be expected to be felt in the gradual modification and improvement of these institutions, especially if aided by our influence and example. However attached the Natives may be to the principles on which these institutions are founded, experience has proved that they are by no means unwilling to modify them in practice on conviction that they are injurious in tendency. In a recent instance, they readily agreed to lower the price paid

for wives on the advantage of such a measure being urged and explained to them.

On the subject of the barbarous practices alluded to as common among the wilder tribes, it may be sufficient for the present purpose to state that the Battas, a numerous people having a language and written character peculiar to themselves, and inhabiting a large portion of the Northern part of Sumatra, are universally addicted to the horrid practice of devouring the flesh of their enemies whom they take in battle, and that many tribes of the Dayaks of Borneo, and the Alfoors of the further East, are addicted to the practice of man-hunting solely for the purpose of presenting the bleeding head as an offering to their mistresses. A man is considered honorable according to the number of heads he has thus procured, and by the custom of the country such an offering is an indispensable preliminary to marriage. It is not to be expected that our Schools will have any direct or immediate influence on people where such practices are prevalent, but indirectly and eventually, as the chiefs of the more civilized states in their neighbourhood acquire power and stability, they may be expected gradually to be brought under their influence and subjected to the restraints of a better state of society.

From this it will appear how extensive are the advantages to be obtained from educating the higher classes, to whom alone we can look for extending the benefits of civilization to the barbarous tribes who would otherwise be entirely beyond the sphere of our influence.

Having now shewn the extent and objects of the proposed institution, the field presented for its operation, and pointed out some of the advantages which may be expected to result, it will be sufficient in conclusion to remark, that the progress of every plan of improvement on the basis of education must be slow and gradual; its effects are silent

and unobtrusive and the present generation will probably pass away before they are fully felt and appreciated. Few nations have made much advance in civilization by their own unassisted endeavours, and none have risen suddenly from barbarism to refinement. The experience of the world informs us that education affords the only means of effecting any considerable amelioration or of expanding the powers of the human mind. In estimating the results of any scheme of the kind the advantages must always be in a great measure speculative, and dependant on the concurrence of a variety of circumstances which cannot be foreseen. This is admitted to apply with its full force to the institution in question, but when it is considered that education affords the only reasonable and efficient means of improving the condition of those who are so much lower than ourselves in the scale of civilization, that the want of this improvement is no where more sensibly felt than in the field before us, and that the proposed plan has the double object of obtaining information ourselves and affording instruction to others, it will be allowed to be at least calculated to assist in objects which are not only important to our national interests, but honorable and consistent with our national character. A single individual of rank raised into importance and energy by means of the proposed institution, may abundantly repay our labour by the establishment of a better order of society in his neighbourhood, by the example he may set and by the resources of the country he may develope. We are not plodding on a barren soil, and while the capacity of the people for improvement is acknowledged, the inexhaustible riches of the country are no less universally admitted.

- If we consider also that it is in a great measure to the influence of Europeans, and to the ascendancy they have acquired in these seas, that the decline of the people in

wealth and civilization is to be ascribed, and that the same causes have contributed to take away the means of instruction they formerly possessed, it is almost an act of duty and justice to endeavour to repair the injury done them. The British influence in these seas is already hailed as bringing freedom to commerce, and support to the independence of the Native states, and shall we not also afford them the means of reaping the fruits of these blessings? Of what use will it be to protect the persons and raise the wealth and independence of these people, if we do not also cultivate and expand their minds in the same proportion. Besides the inducements of humanity, besides the consideration of what is due to our national character, shall we not best preserve the tranquillity of these countries and the freedom and safety of our own intercourse, by improving their moral and intellectual condition? shall we not bind them to us by the firmest of all ties, and build an empire on the rock of opinion, where we neither wish nor seek for it on any other principle?

The object is to commence an institution which shall continue to grow and extend itself in proportion to the benefit it affords; a situation has been chosen the most advantageous for this purpose, from whence as a centre its influence may be diffused and its sphere gradually extended, until it at length embrace even the whole of that wide field whose nature has already been shewn. That it will spread may be considered almost beyond a doubt; we know the readiness and aptness of the people to receive instruction, we know that they have had similar institutions of their own in happier and more prosperous times, and that they now lament the want of them, as not the smallest of the evils that has attended the fall of their power. It is to Britain alone that they can look for the restoration of these advantages; she is now called upon to lay the foundation

stone, and there is little doubt that this once done, the people themselves will largely contribute to rearing and completing the edifice.

But it is not to remote and speculative advantages that the effect of such an institution will be confined ; while the enlightened philanthropist will dwell with pleasure on that part of the prospect, the immediate advantages will be found fully proportionate. To afford the means of instruction in the Native languages to those who are to administer our affairs, and watch over our interests in such extensive regions, is surely no trifling or unimportant object. In promoting the interests of literature and science not less will be its effect ; to Bengal, where enquiries into the literature history and customs of oriental nations have been prosecuted with such success, and attended with such important results, such an institution will prove a powerful auxiliary in extending these enquiries among the people of the further East. Many of the researches already begun can only be completed and perfected on this soil, and they will be forwarded on the present plan by collecting the scattered remains of the literature of these countries, by calling forth the literary spirit of the people and awakening its dormant energies. The rays of intellect now divided and lost, will be concentrated into a focus from whence they will be again radiated with added lustre, brightened and strengthened by our superior lights. Thus will our stations not only become the centres of commerce and its luxuries, but of refinement and the liberal arts. If commerce brings wealth to our shores, it is the spirit of literature and philanthropy that teaches us how to employ it for the noblest purposes. It is this that has made Britain go forth among the nations, strong in her native might, to dispense blessings to all around her. If the time shall come when her empire shall have passed away, these monuments of her virtue will

endure when her triumphs shall have become an empty name. Let it still be the boast of Britain to write her name in characters of light, let her not be remembered as the tempest whose course was desolation, but as the gale of spring reviving the slumbering seeds of mind, and calling them to life from the winter of ignorance and oppression. Let the Sun of Britain arise on these islands, not to wither and scorch them in its fierceness, but like that of her own genial skies, whose mild and benignant influence is hailed and blessed by all who feel its beams.

T. S. RAFFLES.
